

The Paul Memorial Library

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At the Annual town meeting March 1880, the town of South Newmarket accepted, with gratitude, the legacy of \$10,000.00 bequeathed by Dr. John M. Brodhead for the purchase of books for a town library. Resolved: that this being a first gift to the town, it shall be called by his name, the Brodhead Library. John Montgomery Brodhead, M.D., also known as the honorable, was the son of Rev. John and Mary Brodhead, Born in Canaan, NH in 1803. His father was a circuit Methodist Minister who settled in South Newmarket in 1809. From 1853 to his retirement in 1876, Dr. Brodhead was second Comptroller for the Army and Navy services in Washington. D.C. He retired to Newfields, living in the John Shute, Jr. house, Site 51.

Dr, Brodhead also willed that his extensive private library be given to the library after the death of his wife.

Through a New Hampshire Legislative act to promote Free Public Libraries, the town of South Newmarket accepted the conditions and by note of the town on March 14, 1893, appropriated \$50.00 for the maintenance of its Free Public Library. The Secretary of the New Hampshire Board of Library Commissioners pledged the three trustees to appropriate annually \$25.00 for the maintenance, to secure a fitting place, to appoint a librarian, to catalogue the books and accept gifts. When complied with, the state will give a \$100.00 gift of books to said library.

This library was set up in the store of C.B. Stuart on Main Street next to the Universal Church. The Ladies' Book Club gave their library collection of 408 volumes.

Dr. John Brodhead desired to change the name of South Newmarket to the name of Newfields and worked diligently with the State Legislature to no avail. In his will, Dr. Brodhead stated "Ten thousand dollars to the Town of South Newmarket, NH for the purpose of buying books for a town library, to be under control of Selectmen, under condition that the name of the town shall be legally changed to Newfields and so remain. On the same condition, I bequeath my private library. Neither of these bequests shall take effect until the name of the town shall have been changed. At the next town meeting, March 1880, the town voted to accept the bequest of Dr. Brodhead and conditions.

Rev. James H. Fitts, Newfields Historian, was elected representative in November 1894, and accordingly introduced the bill which passed in 1895. Enacted: that the town of South Newmarket be known and called Newfields. This act shall take effect on passage. So in February 1895 the name of South Newmarket was quietly dropped and the older name of Newfields restored. Approved March 14, 1901. The Trustees appointed were: Rev J.W. Fitts, George S. Paul, Harriet Sanborn and Edna Paul. Rev Fitts died in 1900.

In 1904, the home of the library was sold and moved out of town. The Odd Fellows and Rebekah Lodges, who had rented the upstairs, moved to the vestry of the unoccupied Congregational Church. The Post Office was moved down over the hill, nearer the mail trains, to the Daniel C. Wiggin store.

The library was set up in the adjacent building belonging to the Paul family. Two rooms were fixed up for receiving and lending books. Electricity and furnishings were donated by the Misses Paul. Edna Paul was the first Librarian, she was followed by Eva Patridge, Helen Simpson, Doris Goerner and Dorothy Evans.

In 1951, Miss Isabel Paul died having been predeceased by all of the family, she left the following will: To see if the Town of Newfields will vote to accept the bequest of the Paul Homestead and one acre of land as determined by the Executors of the will of Isabel Paul Estate and being the same as made by John w. Durgin in May. Also certain furniture, photographs and books contained in home place and set up in exact location in her living room. Gift of \$20,000.00 from will of Harriet Paul together with \$60,000.00 of Isabel Paul to construct, equip and maintain a library to be known as Paul Memorial Library. To authorize the selectmen and Library trustees to carry out the project. To also engage, approve final construction plans, hire the architect, receive bids for removal of Home, to see that all contracts are carried out, purchase furnishings, and accept the project for the town. After consultation with lawyers and executors, it was agreed that \$50,000.00 be set up to build and furnish the Library and \$30,000.00 placed in trust for maintenance.

The committee chosen to carry out the project included Thomas J. Kimbal, Chairman; Mary B. Hallinan, Clerk; Members: Gladys B. Chick, Nancy L. Locke, Malcolm

MacDougall, Clarence H. Rumford; The Selectmen Robert E. Nixon, Leslie F. Hayden, and Thomas R. Sheehy; the Library Trustees Grace Smith, Eleanor B. Locke and Alfred Conner, Jr. Bernard Maxim of Rye, NH was hired as architect and builder.

During the winter months, a small crew of dedicated men dismantled the building; Board by board was numbered on The Plan for restoring the Memorial Room. The original fireplace was left and pine paneling-bookcases and doors and windows replaced. Sub contractor William Carter and George Smith completed their assignments and Mr. Maxim worked diligently with some volunteers. So, on June 24, 1993, the corner stone was laid with appropriate ceremony. Remarks were made by Mr. Kimball, Rev. Ida Green, Father Charles Leddy, Thomas R. Sheehy and others.

Progress moved fast with the roof on by August 15th and the building taking shape. Driveways and landscape work finished by November 20, 1953. In January 1954, the New Hampshire Fence Co. installed chain and post fence on all established bounds costing \$1,200.00. All Library furnishings were in place by February. The huge task of moving the books was organized and volunteers hand carried boxes and baskets of books across the street to be placed in designated shelves. A great surprise was stored in a third floor closet, which turned out to be the unopened wooden box of Newfields History Books by Mr. Fitts. A price was placed on them and they sold fast. Early March the Memorial Room was in place with all furnishings. Only the painting of Amos Paul suffered slight damage and was restored at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts by Jean Lopardo.

A tour of inspection was approved, and Mr. Maxim turned the keys over. On May 9, 1954 a proper dedication service with the New Hampshire Library Commissioner as guest speaker was held. Generous compliments were heard. The Paul Memorial Library is now in service with the gratitude of the town's people.

(Note: the above is an excerpt from a series of documents titled "Historic Building Inventory" prepared by Grace Smith and Margery Brooke in 1987. The original documents are on file in the library.)